Connotative Meaning of Uzbek Verbs: Evaluative, Emotive and Stylistic Components in Lexicographic and Literary Data

Mirzaabdullaeva Makhliyoxon Khosiljon qizi

Andijan State Technical Institute, Department of Languages and Humanities

Abstract. *Connotation is often treated as a secondary layer of meaning; however, in verb semantics it plays a central role in shaping evaluation, emotional colouring, and stylistic positioning. This paper investigates the connotative meaning of Uzbek verbs with particular attention to their evaluative, emotive, and stylistic components as reflected in lexicographic descriptions and literary usage. The study is based on qualitative analysis of verb entries drawn from the Uzbek Explanatory Dictionary and contextual examples extracted from classical and modern Uzbek prose, including works by Abdulla Qodiriy and O'tkir Hoshimov. By examining near-synonym verb sets, the research demonstrates that connotative distinctions among Uzbek verbs are systematic and relatively stable, rather than incidental or contextually random. The findings show that evaluative judgement, emotional stance, and register are encoded in verb choice and significantly influence interpretation in discourse. The paper argues that connotative information should be treated as an integral part of verb semantics and more explicitly represented in lexicographic practice and literary analysis.*

Key words: *Uzbek verbs, connotation, evaluative meaning, emotive meaning, stylistic meaning, lexicography.*

1. Introduction

In linguistic analysis, verbs are often approached as neutral descriptors of actions, processes, or states. Yet everyday language use shows that verbs rarely function as purely denotative units. Speakers choose verbs not only to describe what happens, but also to express attitudes, emotions, and social positioning. This additional layer of meaning—commonly referred to as connotation—becomes particularly salient in verb semantics, where subtle lexical choices may signal approval or disapproval, emotional involvement, or stylistic elevation.

While connotation has been widely discussed in relation to adjectives and nouns, verb connotation has received comparatively less focused attention, especially in Uzbek linguistics. Existing studies tend to address connotation as a general lexical phenomenon, without systematically examining how verbs encode evaluative and stylistic meaning. This gap is especially noticeable given the richness of Uzbek verb lexicon and its sensitivity to register and emotional nuance.

The present study addresses this gap by analysing the connotative meaning of Uzbek verbs using lexicographic and literary data. The central claim is that evaluative, emotive, and stylistic components are not peripheral but form a stable part of verb meaning. By combining dictionary definitions with contextual usage from literary texts, the paper aims to demonstrate that Uzbek verb connotation constitutes an organised semantic system rather than a set of occasional pragmatic effects.

2. Theoretical Background

The distinction between denotation and connotation has long been recognised in linguistic semantics. Denotation refers to the conceptual or referential content of a lexical unit, while connotation encompasses additional meanings related to evaluation, emotion, and social or stylistic association. Classical semantic theories emphasise that connotation is not arbitrary but culturally and linguistically structured [1-3].

In verb semantics, connotation often manifests through evaluative judgement. Certain verbs inherently encode approval or disapproval, thereby positioning the speaker with respect to the action or its participants. This evaluative dimension has been explored in appraisal theory, where verbs function as resources for expressing judgement and stance [4].

Russian linguistic research, notably Gorokhova's work on verb connotation, highlights that verbs may carry stable connotative components that are independent of context and closely linked to lexical meaning. Uzbek scholarship, including Mamadaliyeva's studies, similarly notes that verbs often express emotional and stylistic nuances that are insufficiently represented in traditional dictionary descriptions[6-7].

Building on these approaches, the present study treats verb connotation as a multi-component phenomenon comprising evaluative, emotive, and stylistic elements that interact with denotative meaning.

3. Materials and Methods

The study adopts a qualitative descriptive methodology. The primary source of lexical data is the Uzbek Explanatory Dictionary, which provides definitions, synonymic relations, and stylistic labels for verb entries. These lexicographic descriptions form the basis for identifying verbs with potential connotative marking.

To contextualise dictionary data, examples were drawn from Uzbek literary prose, primarily Abdulla Qodiriy's Kecha va kunduz and O'tkir Hoshimov's Ikki eshik orasi. Literary texts were selected because they reflect natural language use and often exploit connotative contrasts for expressive purposes.

Verbs were selected according to the following criteria:

(a) participation in near-synonym sets;

(b) presence of evaluative or emotive meaning;

(c) stylistic marking (formal, colloquial, or expressive).

Each verb was analysed with respect to its evaluative orientation (positive, negative, or neutral), emotional colouring, and stylistic register. The analysis does not aim at statistical generalisation but at revealing systematic semantic patterns.

4. Results

4.1 Evaluative Verb Connotation

Analysis of near-synonym verb sets reveals that many Uzbek verbs differ primarily in evaluative meaning rather than denotation. For example, the neutral verb gapirmoq ("to speak") contrasts with vaysamoq ("to babble"), which carries a clearly negative evaluative judgement. While both verbs denote speech activity, vaysamoq implies meaninglessness or annoyance, thereby positioning the speaker negatively toward the action.

Similar evaluative contrasts are observed in verbs describing interpersonal behaviour, such as aldamoq ("to deceive") versus ishontirmoq ("to convince"), where the former encodes moral disapproval.

4.2 Emotive Verb Connotation

Emotive connotation emerges when verbs encode the speaker's emotional involvement. Verbs such as jirkanmoq ("to feel disgust") or entikmoq ("to yearn anxiously") inherently express emotional states rather than merely describing actions. In literary texts, such verbs function as markers of character perspective and psychological depth.

4.3 Stylistic Connotation

Stylistic differentiation is especially evident in verbs associated with formal or euphemistic contexts. For instance, o'lmoq ("to die") is stylistically neutral, whereas vafot etmoq carries a formal and respectful connotation. Literary usage confirms that such verbs are chosen not for denotative necessity but for their stylistic and social appropriateness.

5. Discussion

The findings indicate that Uzbek verb connotation operates on multiple interconnected levels. Evaluative, emotive, and stylistic components are often lexicalised and relatively stable across contexts. This supports the view that connotation is not merely a pragmatic add-on but an integral part of verb meaning.

From a lexicographic perspective, the results suggest that Uzbek dictionaries could benefit from more explicit representation of connotative features, particularly evaluative and stylistic labels. In literary analysis, attention to verb connotation enhances interpretation of character voice and narrative stance.

6. Conclusion

This study has shown that connotative meaning is a fundamental aspect of Uzbek verb semantics. Evaluative judgement, emotional colouring, and stylistic register are systematically encoded in verb choice and play a crucial role in interpretation. By integrating lexicographic data with literary evidence, the paper demonstrates that Uzbek verb connotation forms a structured semantic domain worthy of independent analysis. Future research may extend this approach through corpus-based methods and comparative studies.

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